

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DON YOUNG
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
SEPTEMBER 13, 2005**

THE HEARING WILL COME TO ORDER

**TODAY THE COMMITTEE IS CONDUCTING AN
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE OPERATION OF LOW
STRESS PIPELINES ON THE NORTH SLOPE OF
ALASKA.**

**AS CONGRESSMAN FOR ALL OF ALASKA, I TAKE
A BACK SEAT TO NO ONE IN CARING ABOUT MY
STATE, ITS WORKERS AND ITS ENVIRONMENT.**

**IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR THERE WAS A
RELEASE OF APPROXIMATELY 5,000 BARRELS IN THE
EASTERN OPERATING AREA OF THE NORTH SLOPE, A
BP PRODUCTION AREA.**

**THE PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION IMMEDIATELY SENT
TEAMS TO THE NORTH SLOPE.**

**PHMSA ISSUED CORRECTIVE ACTION ORDERS
TO BP FOLLOWING THAT RELEASE WHICH
REQUIRED BP TO IMMEDIATELY BEGIN TO INSPECT
ALL OF ITS OTHER LOW STRESS PIPELINES ON THE
NORTH SLOPE.**

**THIS PROCESS BEGAN IN THE SPRING AND
CONTINUED ALL SUMMER.**

**ON JULY 19TH, THIS COMMITTEE REPORTED OUT BY
VOICE VOTE THE “PIPELINE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT
ACT OF 2006”.**

**IN THAT BILL, WE REQUIRED PHMSA TO
REGULATE LOW STRESS PIPELINES NATIONWIDE.**

**WE DEFINED LOW STRESS PIPELINES IN THE
BILL TO INCLUDE THE PIPELINE ON THE NORTH
SLOPE THAT WAS INVOLVED IN THE RELEASE OF OIL
IN MARCH.**

**THE BILL REQUIRES PHMSA TO COMPLETE THE
LOW STRESS PIPELINE RULE WITHIN ONE YEAR.**

**IN AUGUST OF 2006, IN CONJUNCTION WITH
INSPECTIONS WHICH PHMSA ORDERED TO BE
CONDUCTED, BP DETECTED A RELEASE OF
APPROXIMATELY 25 BARRELS OF OIL ON ANOTHER
LOW STRESS PIPELINE, THIS TIME IN THE WESTERN
OPERATING AREA.**

AS WAS DONE WITH REGARD TO THE RELEASE THAT OCCURRED IN MARCH, THE LEAK WAS IMMEDIATELY CLEANED UP AND PHMSA ORDERED REPAIRS TO BE DONE IMMEDIATELY.

LAST WEEK, PHMSA ANNOUNCED A NOTICE OF A PROPOSED NEW RULE TO REGULATE LOW-STRESS PIPELINES.

THIS IS THE SAME RULE MAKING REQUIREMENT CALLED FOR BY THIS COMMITTEE IN THE BILL WE REPORTED IN JULY. THE VOTE OF THE COMMITTEE OCCURRED BEFORE THE AUGUST RELEASE OF 25 BARRELS, BUT AFTER THE MARCH RELEASE OF 5,000 BARRELS.

THIS TIME LINE IS IMPORTANT TO PUT THINGS IN CONTEXT.

**THE CONTEXT IS THAT PHMSA DID ITS JOB –
AND CONTINUES TO DO ITS JOB.**

**BP IS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE HELD
ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS FUTURE NORTH SLOPE
OPERATIONS BY PHMSA AND OTHER FEDERAL
AGENCIES WITH ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY.**

THAT IS HOW THE LAW IS SUPPOSED TO WORK.

**PHMSA MUST DO THEIR JOB IN KEEPING THESE
PIPELINES SAFE, AND I SUPPORT THEIR EFFORTS.**

**BP HAS A JOB TO DO ON THE NORTH SLOPE AND
I WILL INSIST THAT THEY DO IT CORRECTLY.**

**THE RECENT RELEASE OF OIL ON THE NORTH
SLOPE CONCERNS ME BECAUSE THE OIL THAT WE
PRODUCE IN ALASKA PROVIDES ENERGY FOR THE
ENTIRE NATION.**

**I WANT OUR OIL DELIVERED TO ITS
DESTINATION SAFELY, WITHOUT DELAY AND
WITHOUT HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT.**

**I WANT TO KNOW WHAT STEPS ARE BEING
TAKEN BY BP TO MAKE SURE THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN
AGAIN.**

**I AM NOT HERE TODAY TO BEAT A DEAD HORSE
ON WHO KNEW WHAT AND WHEN DID THEY KNOW
IT.**

**INVESTIGATIONS ARE BEING CONDUCTED AND ALL
APPROPRIATE ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN
THOSE INVESTIGATIONS ARE COMPLETE.**

**MY INTEREST IS IN GETTING ALASKAN OIL
DELIVERED SAFELY, WITHOUT DELAY AND
WITHOUT HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT.**

**WITH THAT I RECOGNIZE MY COLLEAGUE
FROM MINNESOTA FOR HIS OPENING STATEMENT.**